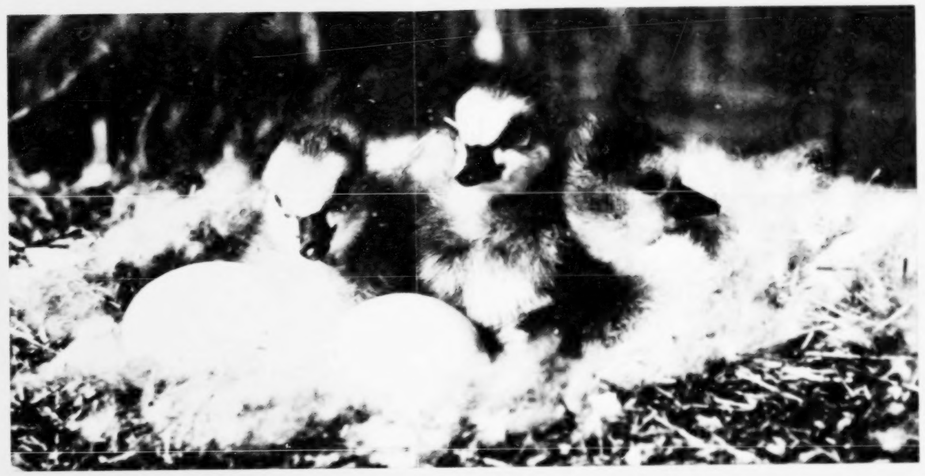
Up 6/991

UPPER SOURIS

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

I 49.44/2:

best copy available



Newly hatched goslings. USFWS photo.

HISTORY

The 1930's brought drought to the Great Plains and disaster to waterfowl. Populations of ducks plummeted to all-time lows and conservationists began to act. A flamboyant political cartoonist from Iowa, Jay N. "Ding"Darling, became director of the newly formed Bureau of Biological Survey and he chose J. Clark Salyer as his top aide.

Darling helped push the Duck Stamp Act through Congress in 1934 and, in 1935, Salyer used Duck Stamp monies to purchase four refuges on the loop of the Souris River.

Two groups, the Civilian Conservation Corp and Works Project Administration, provided large labor forces which built dikes, roads, fences and water control structures. The men were hired locally as well as from other states and as many as 250 men were housed in a military-type camp known as Camp Maurek.

Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge lies in the beautiful Souris River Valley of northwestern North Dakota and extends for nearly 30 miles along the river. This 32,000 acre refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is an important unit in a series of national wildlife refuges in the great waterfowl migration corridor known as the Central Flyway.

Catch of the day! USFWS photo.

MANAGEMENT

The main purpose of the refuge was to provide relief for the dwindling waterfowl populations of the 1930's. Waterfowl reproduction is still the main objective of managing the grasslands, marshes and water impoundments. Grasslands are periodically grazed, hayed and burned to provide good nesting cover and to increase wildlife numbers.

Lake Darling, 10,000 acre lake named in honor of Ding Darling, is the largest of several water impoundments on the refuge. Its primary purpose is to furnish a regulated supply of water to smaller marshes downstream and especially to the larger marshes on the J. Clark Salyer Refuge, 110 miles downstream. The lake was designed to hold a two-year supply of water to safeguard lower marshes against the threat of drought. The dam has also made it possible to reduce flooding and to regulate releases during periods of low flow. Both operations benefit people in the valley below the dam.

The proper management of water permits an active fisheries program on the refuge. This is a cooperative effort between the refuge and the federal fishery assistance office at Bismarck. Northern pike, walleye, yellow perch and smallmouth bass may be caught in the lake and river.

One successful refuge management program has been the re-establishment of a resident Canada goose flock. These magnificent birds were once common but they gradually disappeared with loss of habitat due to changes in land use. The first "honkers" were re-introduced in 1940 and the flock has grown to 250 birds.

WILDLIFE AND WATERFOWL

Waterfowl numbering up to 300,000 can be seen during spring and fall migrations. Tundra swans along with pintails, canvasbacks, redheads, buffleheads and other waterfowl either nest or use the refuge during migration. Up to five species of grebes can be found during the summer.

A colony of nesting cormorants and great blue herons is located near the Grano Recreation Area. White pelicans also use the refuge as a loafing area but do not nest here.

Serious birders will also be able to find Baird's, LeConte's and sharp-tailed sparrows, as well as Sprague's pipit.

White-tailed deer are common on the refuge and an occasional antelope can be seen on the hills above the valley and on the prairie. Rare sightings of elk and moose have also been made. Muskrats are common and careful observation will reveal the tracks of raccoons and mink.

White-tailed deer fawn. USFWS photo.

WILDLIFE AND VISITORS

Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge is a special place for wildlife and people. Yet, as a wildlife refuge, it is a place where the needs of wildlife come first. To ensure that this happens, regulations have been established to provide wildlife and their habitats with adequate protection from visitors. Although these regulations may be inconvenient to some or seem overly restrictive, they are necessary to protect wildlife populations and habitat and, in some instances to safeguard visitors.

Visitors are responsible for knowing refuge regulations. By observing these rules, visitors will make the refuge a better place for themselves and the wildlife they come to enjoy. The refuge is open daily from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for your use.

OPPORTUNITIES

The refuge offers a wide range of activities by which visitors can become better acquainted with wildlife. Opportunities for viewing and studying wildlife, walking, picture taking, berry picking, and cross country skiing are available along the 3.5 mile scenic drive, hiking trails, and other open public use areas. However, for your safety these activities are not permitted during the refuge rifle deer season. Canoeing can be enjoyed on several canoe routes. Photo blinds provide concealment for close-up viewing and photographing the extraordinary dance of sharp-tailed grouse in the spring.

Picnic tables and grills are provided at several locations. Dogs may be walked if they are on a leash. The "Pack Your Trash Home" program is used on the refuge; litter barrels are not provided.

Wildlife interpretive displays and a book sales outlet at the headquarters will furnish visitors with opportunities to understand the refuge and its management. Fishing and hunting are permitted in certain areas under special federal and state regulations. Refuge brochures covering fishing, hunting, canoe trails, the scenic drive, mammals and birds are available at the interpretive sites west of the dam and at headquarters. Use of horses is permitted with permission of the Refuge Manager. Please note that activities not listed above are not permitted.

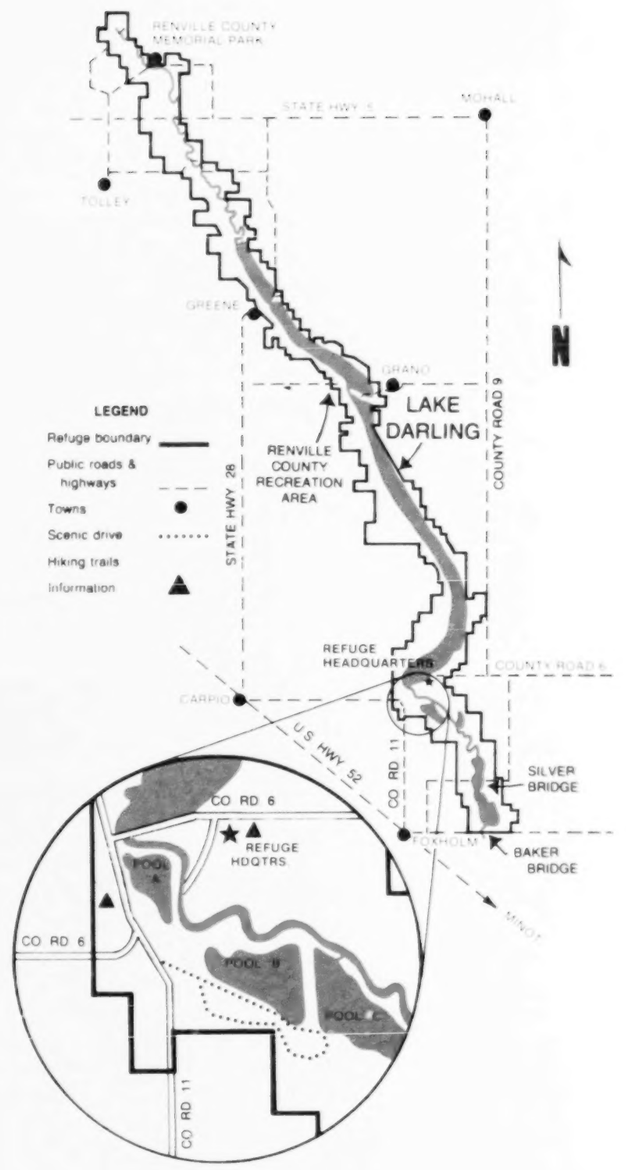
PROHIBITED ACTIVITES

Certain activities are not permitted because they are either unsafe, are not consistent with refuge goals or are unlawful. These include camping, possession of fireworks and firearms (except during refuge hunts), off-road vehicle travel, use of all-terrain vehicles, sailing, water skiing, swimming, trespassing in closed areas, unleashed pets, open fires, littering, drunk and disorderly conduct, use of minnows above Lake Darling Dam, use of boat motors in excess of 50 HP on Lake Darling, and collection of animal and vegetation material. Please read the hunting and fishing leaflets for specific regulations and maps that will help make your outdoor activity more enjoyable.

ADMINISTRATION AND LOCATION

The refuge is administered and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior. Headquarters are located near the Lake Darling Dam and can be reached by traveling on Highway 52 to Foxholm, N.D. and then north on County Road 11 for 7 miles or Highway 83 north of Minot and west 12 miles on County Road 6. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Inquiries should be mailed to Refuge Manager, Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge, Foxholm, N.D. 58738. Phone 701-468-5467.



REFUGE SIGNS—AND THEIR MEANING

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY PROHIBITED
PUBLIC FISHING AREA
Limited public fishing under Federal and State laws.
Consult Manager for current regulations.
AREA BEYOND THIS SIGN CLOSED
All public entry prohibited

REFUGE BOUNDARY SIGN—ENTRY BY PERMISSION ONLY

OPEN TO PUBLIC FISHING

SANCTUARY AREA—OFF LIMITS TO THE PUBLIC UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

RF-6-62680-1 GPO 834 728 June 1991